



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

Assembly Bill 128 Testimony
Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology,
and Financial Institutions
November 4, 2009
Room 411 South

Chairman Sullivan and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on Assembly Bill 128, of which I am Senate lead sponsor.

This bill corrects a potentially serious lapse of security at one of Wisconsin's most important military installations, the Volk Field National Guard Airbase. The combination of the split jurisdiction between state and federal lands, and the difficult-to-patrol terrain surrounding the field, result in a situation in which the area around this installation is at risk of being insufficiently guarded. Especially worrisome is a section of undeveloped territory across which planes must pass as they approach and leave the airfield—a potential staging area for anyone planning mischief. The Juneau County Sheriff's Department has neither the manpower, the equipment, nor the training to defend the perimeter of this facility. And the federal military personnel at the compound cannot bring loaded weapons outside the gate.

While most of us pay little thought to the security of Wisconsin's military facilities, the incident this past spring in which fighter planes chased a stolen aircraft through Wisconsin airspace should serve to remind us that we can't afford to relax our vigilance. Volk Field is the home of the Air National Guard's Combat Readiness Training Center, one of only four in the nation dedicated to honing the skills of the Guard's combat pilots. In addition, the 128th Air Control Squadron is stationed there, comprised of command and control and intelligence personnel who provide aerospace battle management support. To provide anything less than optimal security for this facility is to invite a breach that could have potentially disastrous consequences for our state and our nation. Similar situations also exist at Truax Field in Madison and Mitchell Field in Milwaukee.

Fortunately, we have a simple and cost-effective fix in AB 128. By permitting sheriffs and undersheriffs, with the approval of the state adjutant general, to deputize security officers of the Department of Military Affairs, trained, well-equipped personnel will be able to patrol the perimeter of Volk and other airfields with federal/state jurisdiction conflicts. This policy change will not only permit tighter security around Volk Field, it will also permit the Sheriff's Department to focus its efforts on patrolling the nearby residential areas and provide a greater degree of safety to residents living there. The DMA supports this bill, because it realizes that security at these fields is of the utmost importance, and its responsibility to provide that security must extend beyond the perimeter fence.

As this bill moved through the Assembly, employees at Volk Field raised concerns that the deputizing authority might be used to expand their responsibilities beyond securing the facility. As a result, the bill was amended to make it clear that the authority can only be used for routine security checks of areas adjacent to military facilities, and only for the purpose of protecting the installation, its personnel and its equipment.

Thank you for your consideration of Assembly Bill 128, and I hope that you will recommend its approval so that it can quickly become law.



EDWARD BROOKS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Testimony - Assembly Bill 128

Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology, and Financial Institutions
November 4, 2009

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 128 today. I am sorry that I am unable to be present for today's public hearing but appreciate the opportunity to provide these written remarks for your consideration.

Assembly Bill 128 is a proposal that my predecessor drafted last session at the request of the Juneau County Sheriff, Brent Oleson, to authorize a sheriff to depute certain security officers who are employed by the Department of Military Affairs. In January I went to Volk Field along with Sheriff Oleson to tour and to see for myself just where the need is and why this bill was important. I agreed to re-draft this bill in response to the needs expressed by Sheriff Oleson and Volk Field personnel.

Volk Field is located in rural Juneau County and is under a split jurisdiction -- state and federal. The base covers a vast area of the county and is used for a variety of training purposes with an emphasis on pilot training. It also serves as the place of deployment for thousands of our troops, as well as storage location for considerable military property giving it a high risk status for protection.

Currently, military personnel may patrol the interior of the base perimeter; however they are not allowed to patrol the exterior of the fence. AB 128 will authorize jurisdiction to the sheriff to deputize the military personnel so they may leave the base to conduct routine external security checks. The property surrounding the base is privately owned and not easily accessible. If an incident occurs on the back side of the base and military personnel have observed an incident from their inside location where they regularly patrol, then AB 128 would authorized them to go outside the fence at that location or a nearby location to confront perpetrators immediately. The sheriff's department is not currently as accessible to handle the situation in those remotes areas surrounding the base.

When Assembly Bill 128 was in the assembly committee process, considerable work was done to resolve concerns raised by AFSCME. Rep. Hilgenberg, chair of the Assembly Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, brought together all parties concerned to come to the draft you see before you. This proposal is now a true group effort -- a bipartisan outcome that will greatly benefit our military and non-military personnel using Volk Field.

I hope you will move Assembly Bill 128 through the committee process swiftly so that we may pass this proposal as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and attention to AB 128.



CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM

STATE OF WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
POST OFFICE BOX 8111
MADISON, WI 53708-8111

DATE: November 4, 2009

TO: Chair Senator Jim Sullivan, Senator Spencer Coggs, Senator Tim Carpenter, Senator Joseph Leibham, and Senator Ted Kanavas.

FROM: COL (Ret) Larry L. Olson
Executive Assistant
Department of Military Affairs

SUBJECT: Information on Assembly Bill 128

Good morning Chair Sullivan and members of the Veterans and Military Affairs, Biotechnology, and Financial Institution. I am Larry Olson (COL-Ret) the Executive Assistant at the Department of Military Affairs. With me today is Lt Col Dave Dziobkowski a member of our legal staff. The Commander and Deputy Commander of Combat Readiness Training Center, Volk Field are both on Temporary Duty and out of the State.

Brig Gen Dunbar, The Adjutant General, passes on his thanks for the support this committee provides to all of Wisconsin's service members, and veterans.

We would like to thank the Assembly Committee for Veterans and Military Affairs for their support of AB128. Support from Senator Julie Lassa and negotiations with AFSCME led to the recent passage of AB128 in the Assembly.

This bill creates new law, which is permissive in nature allowing a sheriff to deputize DMA state security force personnel employed at Air National Guard Bases and military installations. As the LRB analysis stated the bill will provide for protection of state and federal personnel, property, and assets that are located at or near military installations and air bases in this state, including any aircraft conducting operations at or near such installations or bases.

We recently had the largest mobilization of the Wisconsin Army National Guard since WWII. The 32d Infantry Brigade Combat Team (32IBCT), which consists of over 3,400 soldiers from 36 Wisconsin communities, is currently deployed to Iraq and anxious to return. The passage of AB 128, will add needed protection and security for all of the forces flying in and out of our National Guard Air Base at Volk Field both active and reserve and for the return of the 32d Brigade early next year.

VOLK FIELD CRTC

Perimeter Patrol Route

